

Staff Report

TO: Public Safety Subcommittee **DATE:** February 6, 2007
COPIES TO: City Council **VIA:** Gary Jackson, City Manager
FROM: Chief William Hogan **PREPARED BY:** Capt. Tim Splain
SUBJECT: Child Pornography / Internet Predator Investigations

SUMMARY STATEMENT: Information pertaining to child pornography and internet predator investigations and initiatives by the Asheville Police Department.

BACKGROUND: The Asheville Police Department receives approximately 4-6 reports of child pornography or on-line predatory behavior each year. This number of reports has remained consistent over the last four years. In comparison, APD receives 60-70 reports of sexual assault, rape, indecent liberties with a child, and indecent exposure each year, with “some” cases involving computer evidence that is consistent with child pornography investigations. To date, APD has not conducted on-line chatting or the luring of suspected internet predators.

CURRENT INITIATIVES: APD is currently developing a Detective position within Criminal Investigations to conduct child pornography and internet predator investigations. This position will also assist with more than 150 Internet Fraud referrals that APD receives yearly from the Internet Fraud Complaint Center (IFCC). This dedicated child pornography / internet predator position does not currently exist within the Criminal Investigations Division, but has been requested in the 2007/2008 budget. A white collar crime / fraud Detective has been redirected and is currently receiving training and equipment to fill this position. The selected Detective will receive extensive training in computer forensic examination, allowing them to recover and extract network and personal computer information that is vital to these investigations. Currently, the State Bureau of Investigations (SBI) is the only area agency that conducts computer forensics. The backlog in the computer forensics division of the SBI is more than one year, making it essential that APD have this ability “in-house.” The selected Detective is already scheduled for a computer “search and seizure” class as a foundation for the following classes:

- CyberCop 101: Basic Data Recovery and Acquisition Training.
- Criminal Investigations in an Automated Environment.
- Seized Computer Evidence Recovery Specialist Program.

Additionally, APD is currently purchasing a Forensics Tower II Computer, Field Analysis Notebook Computer and associated equipment to recover data from suspect computers. This training and equipment was budgeted for in the 2006/2007 budget and will cost approximately \$15,000.

FUTURE PLANS: Upon completion of this training, the APD Detective will be prepared to fully investigate child pornography and on-line predatory behavior. The Detective will be able to examine network information and extract hidden files on personal computers to further these examinations. This Detective will receive additional training and cooperate with the National Association to Protect Children and the U.S. Department of Justice, Internet Crimes Against Children program. This Detective will work cooperatively with their peer at the Buncombe County Sheriffs Department to further area investigations into child pornography and internet predators. The computer forensics function will greatly enhance APD investigations into internet fraud and identity theft also. The first year cost of this position is \$64,796. The following years cost will be \$40,935. It will take approximately 8 to 12 months for this position to be fully operational.